

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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R 101828Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5537
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
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AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 02585

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, WB, GE, GW, UR, US
SUBJECT: FRG OFFICIAL COMMENTS ON INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS

REFS: (A) BONN L305; (B) BONN L926; (C) BONN 2078

SUMMARY: JUERGEN WEICHERT, A GERMAN OFFICIAL CONCERNED WITH INNER-GERMAN AFFAIRS, HAS COMMENTED TO US RATHER PESSIMISTICALLY ON THE NEAR TERM PROSPECTS FOR FRG-GDR RELATIONS. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THE FRG CAN OFFER LARGE CREDITS TO THE GDR, THOUGH IT MIGHT BE GENEROUS IN SPECIFIC NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS WERE NOW IN A DORMANT STATE BUT, HE OBSERVED, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE GDR HAS SHOWN AN INTEREST IN MAINTAINING CONTACTS AND IN KEEPING DOORS OPEN. HE EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT THE EAST GERMAN INTERNAL SITUATION EXERCISED AN IMPORTANT RESTRAINT IN GDR THINKING. AS FOR THE COMPETENCE OF HIS OWN MINISTRY,

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HE SAID IT WAS STILL ACTIVELY INVOLVED DESPITE THE FUNCTIONS RECENTLY ASSUMED BY THE CHANCELLER. END SUMMARY.

1. JUERGEN WEICHERT, AN OFFICIAL OF THE FRG INNER-GERMAN AFFAIRS MINISTRY, HAS MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR REGARDING THE CURRENT SITUA-

TION IN INNER-GERMAN AFFAIRS AND RELATED MATTERS:

THE CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONS

--AT THE PRESENT TIME, THERE WAS NO PROGRESS IN INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS AND, IN FACT, NO SERIOUS DISCUSSION LOOKING TOWARD PROGRESS. BOTH SIDES APPEARED TO BE PREOCCUPIED WITH THEIR OWN PROBLEMS. MOREOVER, THE RECENT GDR MOVES ON BERLIN AND ITS CHARGES AGAINST THE FRG PERMANENT REPRESENTATION HAD CAST A PALL ON ANY IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS.

--ON THE OTHER HAND, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT THE GDR HAS BEEN CAREFUL NOT TO CUT OFF CONTACT AND ALSO TO INDICATE ITS DESIRE FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS. EVEN WHILE THE GDR WAS PRESENTING ITS MEMORANDUM ATTACKING THE FRG PERMANENT REPRESENTATION IN EAST BERLIN (REF C), HONECKER MADE A STATEMENT EXPRESSING HOPE FOR BETTER RELATIONS. WHEN GDR REPRESENTATIVE KOHL CALLED ON MINISTER OF STATE WISCHNEWSKI IN THE CHANCELLERY RECENTLY, KOHL MADE A POINT OF CITING HONECKER'S STATEMENT AND ASSERTING THAT THE GDR WISHED TO IMPROVE RELATIONS.

--IN FRG-GDR RELATIONS (AS IN FRG-SOVIET RELATIONS), AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT WAS THE OVERALL MOOD PROJECTED BY THE SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP. IF SALT AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THAT RELATIONSHIP PROGRESSED, SO WOULD FRG-GDR TIES.

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PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RELATIONS

--AS LATE AS SOME MONTHS AGO, THE FRG WAS MAKING PROGRESS WITH THE GDR ON A LIST OF 25 POINTS DESIGNED TO EASE CONTACTS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST GERMANY AND TO FACILITATE SOME PERSONAL MATTERS. HOWEVER, NO FURTHER PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE RECENTLY AND THERE WAS LITTLE PROSPECT OF ANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE. MOREOVER, THE WEST GERMAN POLITICAL SITUATION WAS NOW SUCH THAT IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE TO OFFER ANY FURTHER CREDITS TO THE GDR, ALTHOUGH IT WAS CLEAR THAT GDR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WERE SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS TO MAKE A WEST GERMAN CREDIT OFFER ATTRACTIVE.

--ALTHOUGH THE FRG COULD NOT NOW OFFER MAJOR CREDITS, IT WAS POSSIBLE PERHAPS TO BE GENEROUS IN PAYING FOR EAST GERMAN TERRITORY IN THE BERLIN "DUCKBILL" AREA OR IN ANY ARRANGEMENT TO SUPPLY ELECTRIC POWER

BETWEEN THE FRG AND WEST BERLIN. HOWEVER, THESE ITEMS

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WERE NOT NOW READY FOR AGREEMENT.

THE EAST GERMAN INTERNAL SITUATION

--THE WEST GERMANS BELIEVED THAT THE GDR FACED AN IMPOSSIBLE DILEMMA. IT COULD NOT PRESS ITS PEOPLE TOO HARD ECONOMICALLY, SINCE THE POLISH EXAMPLE HAD SHOWN THAT THIS COULD LEAD TO SERIOUS POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE EAST GERMAN ECONOMY WAS NOT PERFORMING IN ACCORDANCE WITH PLANS AND WITH SOVIET REQUIREMENTS. SO FAR, THE SED HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO RESOLVE THIS DILEMMA BY MAINTAINING SOME PRESSURES BUT EASING OTHERS. FOR EXAMPLE, EAST GERMAN DISSIDENT WRITERS WERE NOW AGAIN FREE TO WRITE IN SPITE OF THE EXPULSION OF BIERMANN, PROVIDED THEY RESTRAINED THEMSELVES AT LEAST SOMEWHAT.

--THE PRINCIPAL DILEMMA FOR THE GDR NOW APPEARED TO BE THE INCREASING READINESS OF EAST GERMAN CITIZENS

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TO MANIFEST THEIR DISCONTENT, USUALLY BY DEMANDING EMIGRATION TO THE WEST. IF SOMEONE FELT HE HAD BEEN UNDER-PAID OR THAT HIS FAMILY HAD BEEN GIVEN POORER QUARTERS THAN OTHERS, HE NOW TENDED TO APPLY FOR EMIGRATION TO WEST GERMANY--ARGUING THAT THIS WAS LEGAL UNDER THE HELSINKI PROVISIONS. IN THIS SENSE, AN EMIGRATION REQUEST HAS BECOME AN ACT OF POLITICAL DISSIDENCE, WHICH MAY HELP EXPLAIN WHY THE GDR HAS BEEN REACTING SO NERVOUSLY TO SUCH REQUESTS.

THE GAUS INTERVIEW

--GAUS'S INTERVIEW TO THE SPIEGEL LAST WEEK WAS A MAJOR MISTAKE, EXPLAINABLE ONLY IN TERMS OF GAUS'S PERSONAL WISHES TO GAIN PUBLICITY AND TO ESTABLISH AN IMAGE. GAUS TOLD NOBODY IN BONN OF HIS PLANS TO GIVE THE INTERVIEW NOR OF WHAT HE WOULD SAY. THE CHANCELLOR WAS FURIOUS AND IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT GAUS WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE HIS POST AT SOME POINT, THOUGH NOT SOON. THE PRINCIPAL COMPLAINTS AGAINST GAUS WERE: (1) THAT HE OPENED PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON ISSUES IBEST HANDLED DISCREETLY; (2) THAT HE AROUSED FALSE EAST GERMAN HOPES REGARDING THE BORDER AND NATIONALITY QUESTIONS, ON WHICH THE FRG CANNOT BE ACCOMMODATING, AND (3) THAT HE HAS CREATED SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT COALITION.

THE COMPETENCE OF THE INNER-GERMAN AFFAIRS MINISTRY

--DESPISE RUMORS (REF A) THAT THE INNER-GERMAN MINISTRY WOULD BE DISPLACED BY THE CHANCELLERY IN HANDLING FRG-GDR RELATIONS, THE MINISTRY HAD BEEN FULLY INVOLVED IN RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. CHANCELLERY STATE SECRETARY SCHUELER WAS SENDING A MEMO TO MINISTER FRANKE, REITERATING FRANKE'S COMPETENCES AND AUTHORITY.

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2. AFTER PRESENTING THE ABOVE INFORMATION, WEICHERT COMMENTED ON THE GREAT DIFFICULTY OF DEVELOPING A RATIONAL DOMESTIC DIALOGUE WITHIN THE FRG ON INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS. HE CITED THREE EXAMPLES OF THE TYPES OF THINGS THAT LED TO FALSE PUBLIC EXCITEMENT: FIRST,

RECENT REPORTS THAT THE FRG HAD GIVEN THE GDR THE
REGISTRY BOOK OF VISITORS TO ITS EAST BERLIN PHOTO-
GRAPHIC EXHIBIT, WHEN ALL THE FRG HAD DONE WAS RETURN
AN EAST GERMAN REGISTER WHICH IT HAD BORROWED AND IN
WHICH VERY FEW PEOPLE HAD ENTERED THEIR NAMES BECAUSE
OBVIOUSLY IDENTIFIABLE EAST GERMAN POLICE HAD STOOD
RIGHT NEXT TO THE BOOK; SECOND, THE WIDE ATTENTION
GIVEN TO CHARGES THAT THE GDR REPRESENTATIVE IN BONN
(KOHL) HAD YEARS AGO BETRAYED SPD MEMBERS TO THE EAST GERMAN
SECRET POLICE, ALTHOUGH THESE CHARGES WERE APPARENTLY
FALSE; THIRD, THE GREAT EXCITEMENT BEING GENERATED
OVER BARRING ACCESS BY EAST BERLINERS AND EAST GERMANS TO
THE FRG REPRESENTATION IN EAST BERLIN, WHEN IN FACT
NO FRG OFFICIAL HAD REALLY BELIEVED--AT THE TIME THE
OFFICE WAS ESTABLISHED--THAT THE GDR WOULD EVER PERMIT
ACCESS TO IT.

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